The Church, a Family with Babes, Young Men, and Fathers

The Holy Scripture describes the Church of Christ as a family, with babies, children, and parents, where we live in a close relationship with each other and grow to become like the Lord. (I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. 1 John 2:13)

Christ is the head of this Family, of the Church, and cares for it with love. (For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church. Ephesians 5:29)

He does not abandon His newborns and will not let them grow without help. The one born of God is placed in the family and in the school of Christ, to grow as a disciple until he reaches the stature of a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Him. (And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints... till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Ephesians 4:11-13)

The Church or the Body of Christ is the most efficient factory that could ever exist. Its sole purpose is to bring man to the height of the stature of the fullness of Christ. The principalities and powers in heavenly places, when they look at the life of the Church, see how great is the wisdom of God. (To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. Ephesians 3:10-11)

In the Church, we learn self-denial, humility, godliness, we learn to offer ourselves as servants to Christ, we learn to live in righteousness, as He lived.

In His family, we are taught and helped to live as He lived because only in this way will His character traits be imprinted upon us, namely longsuffering, kindness, gentleness, love... and this can only be done in His school or workshop, which is the Church. (He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked. 1 John 2:6)

Upon closer inspection, we can easily observe that all the things related to the salvation of man, from being born again until we reach the stature of a perfect man,

are strikingly similar to the things we encounter in this short life on earth.

At the coming into the world, we witness the birth of a child, which is very similar to being born again in the Kingdom of God. (For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me. 1 Corinthians 4:15-16)

A natural child cannot choose the family in which to grow up; the parents from whom he is born will be his family. For growth, the natural child is nourished with breast milk. Everything is absolutely new for the newborn child. He assimilates everything he sees and hears from his parents.

So it is with the one born again, he finds himself in a family with spiritual parents (the Body of Christ, which is the Church) who nourish him with spiritual milk as an infant. (And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat. 1 Corinthians 3:1-2)

He assimilates everything he sees and hears from his spiritual parents. (Ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children. 1 Thessalonians 2:11)

A little later, the natural child proceeds with school enrollment and then, after some time, graduation... In this world, we cannot conceive that you can become a doctor without attending medical school and without teachers.

The same must happen with the spiritual child. You cannot reach the height of the stature of the fullness of Christ without being a disciple in His school. (But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. Acts 19:9)

God births us anew, grants us the Holy Spirit to guide us, places us in His school where we have spiritual parents and teachers, to grow us according to the standard of His Kingdom.

He has given us everything we need to reach the stature for which we were created. (From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. Eph. 4:16)

This school of discipleship has one goal, for the disciple to become like the Teacher. We all must follow this school which aims ultimately at obtaining the image of His Son

in us. (The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master. Luke 6:40)

The Son of God was sent by the heavenly Father to earth to establish the Church, which is the Body of Christ. He is the founder of the discipleship school, of the Church which he cares for dearly. (I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Matthew 16:18; For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church. Ephesians 5:29)

The Lord Jesus made disciples, then sent them throughout the world, so that they in turn might make other disciples and enroll in the school of Christ anyone who wishes to enter this school. (Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen. Matthew 28:19-20)

We can take as an example the disciples of the Lord, but especially the apostle Paul. He devoted his entire life to the service of the Church of Christ.

He made disciples whom he taught in order to present them perfect in Christ before God. (Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily. Colossians 1:28-29)

Only in His school can the relationships between disciples be adjusted until they reach full maturity and unity in all things, unity that will also be found in His eternal Kingdom. (That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. John 17:21)

A person must go through various trials, so that throughout the school they may acquire the character traits of the Lord Jesus, to be found worthy to dwell with God and with all those who have graduated from this school of discipleship and who have His traits imprinted in their character.

We will take as an example longsuffering. How can we come to have it imprinted in our character?

To begin with, we will learn and assimilate the Lord's teaching on non-resistance, then, when trials come upon us, we put it into practice by following in the footsteps of our spiritual forefathers, who in turn follow in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus. (And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Matthew 5:40-41)

Through this school of patience, which makes its perfect work, each of us must pass, because only in this way can we reach the perfection of our character. (My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. James 1:2-4)

This post is an excerpt from the booklet "The Church – The Body of Christ", which you can read in full, free of charge. More studies and resources for spiritual awakening are available at https://www.unmodifiedword.com.